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BY WALT MASON.

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CHAPTER I.

THE GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION.
"Jim," said the editor of The Gazette to the blend foreman, "here's the governor's Thanksgiving proclamation. Can you run it in today?"

"All right: I don't know of anything that would be more interesting reading to me. And why? Because I understand Mr. Wardwell will invite some friends to dinner on Thanksgiving, and I tell you, James, there's no man now living can arrange such a repast as the urbane, genial and accomplished Theophilus Wardwell; his dinners are songs without words; they beat the dreams of professional lotus eaters, and his Thanks-giving dinner will be a revelation in roast turkey and a symphony in pump-

"I s'pose you'll be there?"

"If I'm not it'll be because this poor, lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave. He always invites the same people, and I am one of them. When he reads the governor's proclamation he will sit down and write invitations to his chosen friends, and the chosen friends will look forward to the day with

"Do you want to read the proof when



'DO YOU WANT TO READ THE PROOF?" "I guess not, Jim; look it over your-

of his important functions to a subordinate that the editor of The Gazette filled one home with woe and created the chaos which made this narrative possible.

CHAPTER IL.

A BANQUET HALL DESERTED. The stateliest turkey that ever inhaled the pure air of freedom was ready for the teeth of the hungry. The noblest pumpkin that ever grew on a vine under a benevolently smiling sun had been reduced to pies, and was also ready for the famished, and the board fairly groaned with the other sundries which constitute a thoroughly appropriate Thanksgiving dimer, but the host, the master of all the splendor, the designer of the elaborate feast, was not happy. There was sorrow in the heart of Theophilus Wardwell. Sorrow and anxiety and wonder had absolute control of him, and his wife was weeping in the shadows, and the dining room was filled with gloom. The dinner hour had passed and the invited guests had not arrived. The remorseless clock

there came no ring at the doorbell.
"Rachel," said Mr. Wardwell to his sobbing wife, "I'll wait just ten minutes longer, and then if our friends do not come we'll at all we can and give the balance of this feast to the poor or send it to the heathen. It is a sorrowful old overlooking the garden that he made Thanksgiving day for us. We expected those admirable translations of Horace

on the wall kept measuring off seconds

with inexorable regularity, and still

a feast of reason and a flow of sout, and have only a waste of loneliness and woe. I don't understand it."



"I'LL WAIT JUST TEN MINUTES LONGER." "It's horridly, shamefully awful," moaned Mrs. Wardwell. "I'll never

"I wish you would never groan again. Things are bad enough without your lamentations. Let us fall to; let us be as grateful as we may under the circum-

stances. The time is up."

And so that sorrowful pair sat down in gloomy grandeur and ate as best they could, but it was a mirthless banquet and soon over.

The absence of Mr. Wardwell's friends was the most inexplicable thing in the world. He was renowned as the most graceful of hosts; his dinners were poems; his wife was charming; his home was a marvel of comfort and convenience. When the governor's proclamation appeared in The Gazette, announcing that the 20th of November would be observed as Thanksgiving day, Mr. Wardwell, after due consultation with his wife, wrote beautifully worded letters to his friends asking them to take dinner with him on the eventful day—to use his own modest words, "Join me in a Thanksgiving lunch in my home."

That able man, the editor of The Gazette, was invited. Who has not heard of the editor of The Gazette? He it was who wrote the stirring article entitled "Whither Are We Drifting?" which created consternation from ocean to ocean, and placed the writer upon the pinnacle of fame at the early age of forty. It was customary with Mr. Johns, the editor, to repeat the famous editorial from memory at dinner parties, and in his re-ply to Mr. Wardwell's invitation he had explicitly stated that he would deliver it, word for word, as it was originally written, immediately after the dinner.

Mr. Stiver, the musician, had also been invited. You all know about the illustrious Mr. Stiver, who composed so many delightful songs and sang them so irresistibly to enchanted audiences. His picture was printed in the local papers, and it is altogether unreasonable to suppose that you have not seen it. When ever Mr. Stiver ate dinner at Mr. Wardwell's he invariably rendered several of his most charming selections, and he had written Theophilus that nothing short of an epidemic would keep him away on Thanksgiving day.

Dr. Shadley had also received an invitation, and had answered that he would do himself the honor to be at the appointed place promptly, adding face-tiously that his appetite would be concealed about his person. The doctor was the most interesting and amusing story teller in the civilized world. It was quite impossible to listen to one of his anecdotes without being convulsed with laughter, and since he had made the Wardwell home echo with merriment time and time again his absence on this occasion was beyond all human

understanding.

Professor Snell, of the university, had been invited as well and had remained away, as had the others. The professor made Mr. Wardwell's house almost his home. It was in the little blue room of two hemispheres. His erudition was a beautiful element of a Wardwell din-ner; it furnished a solid background for

vives, and several other gentlemen with their wives had been expected, and consequently it was no wonder that Theophilus and Rachel Wardwell were obliged to eat alone. "It is the most humiliating day of my life," said Mr. Wardwell. "I can only

think of one thing for which I should be thankful, and that is that my business does not take me out of the house. I would be ashamed to look a human being in the face if I had to go on the street. Crying won't do any good, Rachel—'weep no more, my lady, weep no more today.' Give the servants instructions to dispose of these viands in any way they choose, and then let us try to forget this appalling occasion."

And Mr. Wardwell went bravely to his library and endeavored to bury his sorrow by studying "quaint and curious volumes of forgotten lore."

CHAPTER III. THE COMING OF THE GUESTS.

For several days following that memorable fiasco of a dinner Mr. Wardwell led the life of a recluse. He was a regular contributor to a great magazine, and his articles all treated of travels in foreign and unheard of countries. The fact that his descriptions of the manners and customs of the Hindoos and Bedouins and Malays were singularly true to life is all the more remarkable because he had never been away from his native village, and a month or two after the date of this story he received a personal letter from the editor of the magazine complimenting him upon his realistic description of the burning and eating of a European traveler by a cannibal. He wrote this story during the sad days following the wrecked dinner.



Mrs. Wardwell was inconsolable. Poor

voman, she couldn't find relief by writ-

ing articles about people she had never heard of, and she began to grow pale and was filled with a nervous horror of meeting anybody, and she imagined that she was the laughing stock of the town. Nearly a week had elapsed, and her sorrow was as heavy if not so hysteric as ever, when one day there was an enthusiastic ring at the doorbell. There wasn't a servant in the house; she must either open the door herself or have her husband do it, or leave it unopened. She decided to adopt the husband plan. She wouldn't have opened it herself, for she was morally certain that she would be confronted by some heartless mocker who would shriek with laughter over her disastrons dinner, and so she called her husband. That brave man with a severe face went to the door and opened it, and fairly shook with rage and won-der. What manner of refined insult was

Standing before him, smiling as bland-

which have astonished the litterateurs the frothy mirth of the doctor, and the languishing songs of the musician, and the brilliant sentences of the editor, These gentlemen who have been enumerated had been expected with their

empty formality?"

intensity from the lips of the editor of The Gazette. He was reclining upon a lounge, breathing with difficulty. The doctor rushed to his rescue with a case of surgical instruments, but the editor waved him away and moaned:

upon that bilious, blear eyed foreman of mine! To think that all this should come of allowing him to read a proof! Mr. Wardwell, and all of you," he said, rising to his feet, "we are the victims of a scrawny printer whom I intrusted with the governor's proclamation and the reading of the proof. He placed the figures '20' where '26' should have been, Mr. Wardwell made all the preparations on the 20th, and we, who probably never read the proclamation, arranged to visit him on the 26th. I can only say that as the editor of The Gazette I will discharge the printer without a recommendation, and that as a man who has blood in his veins I'll either punch his head or perish in the attempt.

concluded there was an era of silence. Then Mr. Wardwell turned to his wife with a ghastly smile and said: "Rachel, is there anything to eat in

the house?"

groceries as Mrs. Wardwell can consolidate into a dinner?"

ful today that the slight cloud which darkened the horizon as we came in has given place to the sunshine of—er—to the sunshine, Mr. Wardwell."

CHAPTER IV. THE DINNER.

They do say that there never was such Thanksgiving dinner in all the country as the one enjoyed by the guests of Mr. Wardwell. There was no turkey, nor was there a pumpkin pie, and con-sequently the bill of fare wouldn't interest you. But the lonely dinner of nearly a week before became a topic of mirth and reminded the doctor of about a dozen of the funniest stories imaginable, so that the ladies laughed until they cried. And the musician fairly surpassed himself in singing that touching ballad of his own composition, "When Mary to the Dentist Goes," which is now of world wide celebrity; and the professor discoursed so admirably of the foibles and idiosyncrasies of the second Ramesis that he was voted the most interesting speaker who ever enlivened a Thanksgiving party; and the editor of The Gazette recited his famous article with unusual fervor, so that some of the ladies wept again, The dinner lasted two hours, and

ly as though they had never grievously | when it was over there was heard a and wantonly wounded him to the quick, ring at the doorbell, and who should

HOWDID YOU

slam the door in their faces, but he arrested the motion of his arm. Then it coked as though he would turn loose the simoom of his wrath, but the words died on his lips, and he ended by inviting them all to walk in, smiling sardonically, and "every one knew that some one had blundered." He led the procession into the parlor and then called his wife, who joined him in a maze of bewilderment. And when the guests were all seated, equally stupefied with wonder, Mr. Wardwell faced them and

sponse to my invitation? I regret to say that you have come too late to partake of my turkey or pie, but you have come in time to teach me a valuable lesson. After this, when I want my friends to call on me on New Year's, I'll ask them to come on Christmas; if I desire to see them on the Fourth of July, I'll ask them to visit me on Easter Sunday, and when I want a gathering on Thanksgiving day I'll specify George Washing-ton's birthday as the date for the assem-

vited to his Thanksgiving dinner! There was the doctor, fairly bubbling over

with mirth and good humor; and the sweet singer, with a roll of music under

his arm; and the editor of The Gazette, pompous in the knowledge that he, and

he only, was the author of that sublime

article, "Whither Are We Drifting?"

other men who had been invited were

there with their wives! It was evidently a conspiracy to humble and crush and

wreck the life of Theophilus Wardwell.

For a moment he seemed disposed to

"This is Thursday, ladies and gentle-en. Well, last Friday Mrs. Wardwell and I had a somewhat wholesome repast prepared for you all, and we waited and waited for your coming until our hearts ached with disappointment, but we should have been patient, I see; we were altogether too hasty. If we had only waited six days longer, you would have been with us. A trifle like six days would have caused us no inconvenience whatever, but we were so thoughtless." Mr. Wardwell paused for breath, and the professor took advantage of the lull

"There is some gross misunderstand ing here. You invited us to eat Thanks giving dinner with you, and here we are. But as for me, I did not come to

"You are correct in saying that I in vited you to come on Thanksgiving day. Then why, may I ask, didn't you come

on Thanksgiving day?" "Why," responded the professor, in a dazed way, "this is Thanksgiving day!" "Certainly it is," cherused the doctor, and the editor, and the musician; "this

is Thursday, Nov. 26." "No one questions that," cried Mr. Wardwell, with bitter irony, "and to-morrow is Friday, the 27th, and I have excellent reason to believe that the following day will be Saturday, the 28thin fact, I shouldn't be surprised if Sunday turned out to be the 29th. But how do you make out that this is Thanks-giving day? Here is The Gazette, with the governor's proclamation in cold type. and it reads 'Nov. 20,' Does the governor's proclamation count for anything. or is it merely a vain ceremony-an

Before any one could speak a hollow groan was heard. It came in all its

"Oh, what a misfortune! A malison

When the editor's explanation was

"Scarcely a thing." "Ladies and gentlemen, will you assist me in devouring such remnants of

"Mr. Wardwell," said the doctor, with emotion, "a bowl of water, with a crust of bread, would be a feast in your home. The flow of intellect, sir-the flow of reason, as it were, Mr. Wardwell-the intercourse of kindred minds-atone for all deficiencies in the material-aw-erin short, Mr. Wardwell, anything will do for a dinner, and we'll be doubly thank-

GUESS ON INDIANA?

Every body now knows HOW Indiana went, but we haven't yet found out HOW much. When we do, we'll let you know. In the mean time the TARIFF'S ALREADY OFF and all the Clotning in our house. Come or write quick.

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Grover Cleveland told Adlai Stevenson that it is a positive fact that he overheard Benjamin Harrison tell Whitelaw Reid that James B. Weaver had stated in the presence of Jas. G. Field that John Bidwell and J. B. Cranfill heard Thos. L. Carter, Chairman of the National Republican Committee and W. H. Harritty, Chairman of the National Democratic Committee say, that

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have done the ringing but the foreman

of The Gazette, whose doom had been pronounced. He had come to call the

editor away on important business, and

it was quite affecting to see that able

week. By one of your blunders you caused Mr. Wardwell's dinner to be a

misfit, but there never was a nobler dinner than I have had today."

man embrace his subordinate and say: "Your wages are raised two dollars a

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